

Good Morning, Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Human Services committee, I am here today to express concerns about **H.B. 5243 An Act Concerning Sober Homes**.

As a person in long-term recovery I have experienced the sober house experience personally and professionally. I started in treatment in Connecticut Valley Hospital and from there I went into a halfway house in Glastonbury. After the halfway house, it was suggested that my next step be an oxford house. Due to my strong desire to remain in recovery and the trust that I had in my counselor, I took that suggestion. I spent the next seven months in an oxford house where I learned various skills, including paying bills, balancing life and recovery, and independent living skills.

When I left the oxford house, I had attained the financial independence, as well as the emotional independence that I needed to live on my own. I moved into my own apartment and lived there for two years, before purchasing my own home. I have seen the successes that come from individuals who have utilized a sober house. Of the six individuals that I resided with, four are actively in recovery and contributing to society. Sober Houses are a great means for helping individuals to recover and give back to society rather than taking away from society, as those in active addiction do.

Today, I work fulltime and manage two recovery houses. It is wonderful to see the women, who come through the houses, transform their lives. They also have a strong desire to give back to the community. Sober houses as well as oxford houses bridge the gap from individuals who have struggled in society to individuals who become productive members of society.

Please do not put in place a statute that may well jeopardize access to housing for persons striving to recover their lives and become productive members of society. Please consider working with DMHAS, the Recovery Housing Coalition of CT and the recovery community to accommodate community needs. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Veronica Arroyo